

u3a
Dacorum

The Digest

Autumn 2023

Edition 117

Autumn Glory In Gaddesden. Photo: Laura Rouse

u3a Dacorum Digest

To become a member, to join u3a Dacorum, or to renew your membership:

Online: Use this link to access renewing or joining instructions or scan the QR codes opposite:

<https://u3adacorum.org/2023-membership/>

By post: Request a membership form to be sent by post from the Membership Secretary (details on last page).



Patchwork Group

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Forthcoming Committee Meetings in 2023:

29th September

3rd November

1st December

Venue: Boxmoor Trust Centre, 10 am to 12 noon.

u3a Members are always welcome to attend either in person or on Zoom. Please let the Secretary know in advance.



Exploring London – Albertopolis

u3a Dacorum NEEDS YOU



**Without more Trustees,
especially a Chair and
Treasurer, we cannot go on.**

At the AGM, we had just six people elected as Trustees for u3a Dacorum, which is the smallest number for many years. As well as being trustees, most carry out key roles for u3a that support our activities, and, equally important, work to meet our legal and constitutional requirements. We currently have two trustees who have taken on two roles each, while others, who are no longer trustees, have agreed to continue as Membership Secretary and Halls Secretary. Since the AGM, Pam Stonebrook has resigned as Chair. This means we have five trustees, which is the minimum required in our Constitution, and at the time of writing (in August), we do not have a Chair or Vice-Chair. This is not sustainable in the short-term or long-term.

In many ways we are a strong u3a – financially sound; a membership of 1,228 members; a wide and diverse range of meetings each month. However, without more trustees and associate members of the Committee, who actively contribute to running our u3a – now and for the future – it will not be possible to continue, and we may very reluctantly have to consider closure. We must have a pool of people supporting the trustees, some of whom could become trustees in the future.

At our next AGM in 2024, our Treasurer will be stepping down, and we need someone to shadow him, ready to step in next year. We are considering the option of a contract bookkeeper if this would make the Treasurer's role less demanding.

Being a trustee is interesting and enjoyable, as you work with other Committee members. You can either continue to use work skills and knowledge, or develop new skills reflecting your interests. The Committee meetings are briskly run and focus on making necessary decisions and actions to keep u3a Dacorum running well. The Third Age Trust provides trustee insurance.

If you'd like to help, please contact Ellen at secretary@u3adacorum.org or one of the other Trustees (see inside back page).

The Trustees

Secretary's Report

In early August, we held our AGM that around 60 members attended, while 167 voted by proxy. A note on the outcome of the AGM is on our website (under News then AGM & SGM).

As set out on page 4 opposite, following the AGM we now have the fewest number of trustees for many years. Even with the help of Committee Associates, it will be harder to run a thriving u3a. We need more people to become trustees, or to support the Committee. This ensures we're not reliant on a handful of people and have much greater resilience as an organisation – for various reasons we've had three resignations over the last three years.

As a member-run organisation, our u3a is only as strong as the contribution our members make to running it. Therefore, please get more involved, whether it's supporting your group co-ordinators, or supporting a Committee member, or becoming a trustee to help us continue to grow. I know Terry Thirlwell would welcome a deputy to help with setting up our monthly meetings, record equipment held for use of groups, and replace, as necessary. I'm sure others would welcome support.

Ellen Duffy, Secretary@u3adacorum.org

Treasurer's Report

I've been treasurer of u3a Dacorum for more than the 2-year stretch I signed up for. Since no one came forward to release me, I have accepted that I will serve for a further year to keep the society going. However I do not feel comfortable in the role. I am beginning to make mistakes. I am also finding myself involved in addressing issues where I may not have the support of some of our members.

So I need to make it clear to everyone that I will not be continuing as treasurer after April 2024 except to complete and present the accounts for the year to 31 March 2024.

U3A Dacorum must have a treasurer to operate. So if no one comes forward to relieve me, my last task will be to close the society, something I would keenly regret.

I would be happy to talk through the requirements of the role with anyone interested in taking over.

Peter Marshall

U3A Photocopying Service.

This service is available free for a Coordinator of a Group. New Coordinators may not be fully aware of the service. Photocopies A4, A3 and A5 in black/white or colour can be made for your Group.

I can receive jobs by email and collection can be arranged.

You can visit if you wish to see the job being done or necessary if using books as a source.

Get in touch. My details are in the Committee Associate list.

Judy Baldwin

Membership

As of early August, we have 1228 members. Of these, 36 have joined since 1 April.

We are one of the larger u3a groups in the country and have managed to keep the numbers up through COVID and beyond.

I hope you are all enjoying your membership and engaging with the groups that meet your interests. The more we involve ourselves, the more satisfying it becomes so if you can think of any ways that you can help your co-ordinators or the committee, then your ideas and offers of help will be very welcome.

All the best

Jean Sniders, Members@u3adacorum.org

Monthly Meeting Refreshments

As a newly elected Trustee I have been asked to co-ordinate the refreshment rota for our monthly meetings. I will continue to notify the chosen groups in advance and will ask the editor to include the details in the digest.

The next two meetings are at Boxmoor Playhouse. Our refreshments will be served by the News Group in October and the Science and Technology Group in November. I have yet to allocate a group for the December meeting.

Jane Campbell

Scan these codes to access the u3a Dacorum web site.



u3adacorum.org
Web Site



u3adacorum.org
Membership Form

Monthly Meetings

4 September – Vicky Hope-Walker: Paralympics

Vicky has been working in the heritage and arts sector for over 35 years. She began her career in Houston Texas, returning to the UK and working for the National History Museum, National Trust, Local Authorities and as an independent consultant. For the past 9 years she has been involved in the formation of the National Paralympic Heritage Trust. In her talk she will share the extraordinary story of the Paralympics, alongside the work of the Trust and why it is so important to ensure the Trust's collections are recorded and shared.

2 October – Paul Barwick: The Mystery of the Body in the Bag

In August 2010 MI6 spy Gareth Williams body was found naked in his Pimlico flat. He was locked inside a North Face sports holdall placed into his bath. This real-life espionage intrigue exploded onto our television screens as sensational details were provided about Gareth's life and death. Police could find no DNA or fingerprints anywhere in the vicinity. The front door was locked, from the outside!

Who would want to kill this mild-mannered maths genius? This presentation delves beneath the sensational media headlines, into Gareth's murky world of espionage. We trace Gareth's life from a young boy with enormous mental capacity to the man who may have known too much! We confront the various possibilities as to his demise and who may be responsible for this grisly death.

6 November – Rupert Dickens: Album Cover Art 1950 – 2000

Some of the most iconic images of the 20th century were created, not for galleries or private patrons, but for record sleeves. The zebra crossing immortalised on the cover of the Beatles' Abbey Road is the site of a pilgrimage for people traveling thousands of miles to recreate this famous scene. Album covers have been adorned by Andy Warhol, Peter Blake, Yoko Ono, Richard Hamilton and a host of lesser-known artists and designers. We will explore the art of the album cover and reveal the close connections between visual and musical creativity in the vibrant period of popular culture.

4 December – Steve Lester: Insights of a Provincial Auctioneer

Steve has been an auctioneer for over 25 years and during that time he has sold everything from Cadburys Crème eggs to Faberge eggs, Corgi cars to Classic cars and most things in between!!! He will give us an insight into how auction/salerooms work, how a potential buyer can operate in a sale-room, with a few trade secrets thrown in for good measure, He will talk about some items that turned out to be quite important finds.

Lee Pace – speakers@u3adacorum.org

Group Reports

General Notice: Please do not bring small change to meetings to pay your dues (except for refreshments) as it is a bind for organisers to count and bank. Either £1 and £2 coins or very welcome to change up notes as we are more than happy to offload the coins!

Short Day Trips

The following trip has been arranged for 2023:

Cambridge City Centre Tues 19th September 2023

Cost £19.00 Per Person, includes Coach & Driver's Tip.

Very few places left.

Please book with the following details:

Telephone Number, Email Address, Each passenger's Membership Number, full name, & pick up point (**TRING** 9:30am, **BERKHAMSTED** 9:40am, **GADEBRIDGE P&R** 10am or **HEMEL OLD BUS STATION** 10:10am).

We leave the venue at 4pm to return home.

Please send a separate SAE and cheque made out to "U3A DACORUM" to: **Mr L Howard 25 Crackley Meadow, Hemel Hempstead, HP2 7SQ**. You are NOT booked on a trip until I receive your cheques. Please book early, seats are booked on a first come first served basis.

Lionel Howard, 01442 266011 or email plumberdad@gmail.com

Short Day Trips – An announcement

I'm having problems with my eyesight so after the last trip this year to Cambridge on 19 September I will reluctantly be giving up the arranging of the short day trips.

It has been a great pleasure and I have enjoyed coordinating the trips. Thank you all for the support you have given me over the years and thank you for the kind emails, letters and cards I have received.

It would be lovely if someone (or two) would be willing to take on coordinating short day trips. Please contact me on email:

plumberdad@gmail.com or phone 01442 266011.

I would be happy to assist if required.

There is a lot demand for this group and it would be a great pity if it has to close.

Lionel Howard

Arts, Crafts and Skills

We now meet at the Kings Arms in Berkhamsted and enjoy trying a variety of activities. Jean, who runs the Pencil Drawing u3a Group kindly led the July meeting, and showed us how to draw fruit and vegetables, with mixed levels of success.

Having seen a hand-stitched card for sale at £10 locally, we attempted making our own patterns in addition to stitching them, with some members thinking ahead to Christmas.

As it will be messy, we will be at a different venue for our September meeting, and are looking forward to making paper. Then back at the Kings Arms in October.

We are also planning to run a Free Motion Machine Embroidery day in the Council Chamber, Berkhamsted Civic Centre on Friday. 27 November. This event, from 10 am – 2.30 pm will be free to u3a members and there should be a few spare spaces, so if you would like to join us, please do contact me for fuller details at: group223@u3adacorum.org.

Sue Woodhams

Exploring Towns and Villages

We have been keeping our explorations fairly local in the last few months, Berkhamsted Castle and Bovingdon to name but two. The day at Berkhamsted Castle was particularly hot and I have included a photo of us sitting on and around a bench in a state of collapse as there is no shade there. However, thanks to John Waller for giving us an enlightening talk about the history of the site.

Anne Auld took us around Bovingdon and we admired the library, one of the more extensive gardens and the buildings in the village centre, with all their history.

A little further afield, Mike Atkins took us to Harefield where we wandered around the hospital site, enjoyed hearing about its history and found a delightful garden started by the mother of one of the long term patients there and now maintained by hard working volunteers. It provides a peaceful place for patients and visitors to sit away from the wards.

We usually meet at Gadebridge Park car park and share cars to get to our destinations. It would be helpful if more willing drivers were to join us as it sometimes can be a bit of a squash!. Our day always includes a coffee break and lunch to keep us going.

Laura Rouse, Jean Sniders

Book Group 363

We started in January 2023 as a small Home Group of 6 people and now feel we would like to grow to 8. We already have a newcomer for September so have one vacancy left.

We meet every month on the third Thursday at 2pm starting with tea and a biscuit enabling all to wind down from their busy lives. We read books published since 1973 of any genre. Each member has the opportunity to propose a book. So far we have read *Oh William* by Elisabeth Strout followed by *The Girls of Slender Means* by Muriel Spark. Then a crime story by Ellie Griffiths about a Forensic Archaeologist in Norfolk. All very different but each resonated with modern life. This month we are reading *Conclave* by Robert Harris about the election of a Pope!,

If you would be interested, do try us. The next meeting is on 21 September when we will be discussing *The Bloomsbury Girls* by Natalie Jenner.

Barbara Plater

Exploring London

Although recent rail strikes have entailed some date changes, Exploring London is proving as popular as ever. In May Sue Woodhams led groups around a 'Gentleman's London' of Bond and Jermyn Streets, Piccadilly plus the Mall lined with Union Jacks and concluded in front of the imposing statue of George VI and Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother.

It was Maida Vale with Sue Miller in June when we strolled around this neighbourhood famed for its tranquil canals with beautiful houseboats, wide picturesque tree-lined streets, impressive mansion blocks, and Regency stucco terraced town houses plus a preponderance of blue plaques. A group photo was taken outside one of the few remaining Victorian Cabman's Shelters.

In July John took us on a journey from Hyde Park to South Kensington learning how the financial success of the 1851 Great Exhibition enabled the redevelopment of this area to create the cultural quarter known as Albertopolis housing our National Museums/Institutions. A group photo was taken in Hyde Park with Kensington Palace in the background and alongside a marble statue of Queen Victoria.

In August Bernard has us 'Walking on Water' as we follow the River Fleet to Blackfriars. In September be prepared for the 'Lambeth Walk' with Sue Miller and in October we explore more of Mayfair with Hilary concluding this year with Sue Woodham's and 'Christmas Lights'.

Sue Miller

Music Miscellany 089

We continue to meet on a 4 weekly basis on Thursday mornings at St Francis Church Hall. We enjoy a wide range of music which perfectly complements the Classical Music Appreciation and Jazz that occupy the other Thursday mornings. There is ever more a/v rather than just audio presentations and this will increase as we now have a new modern DVD player. We are also regularly reviewing more recent, post-war popular music; stuff that we enjoyed in our younger, and even not so young, days. A session of Old Grey Whistle Test recordings, was very well received.

Our programme for the remainder of 2023 should have great appeal:

21 September More Old Grey Whistle Test
19 October The ever popular, in & on demand Mike Beevor
16 November The intriguing James Robertson – music to amaze
14 December Christmas warm-up; the full monty, with mince pies (optional). Everyone warmly welcomed. Come and see.

Bob Day, bob.day@sky.com

Military History

July saw us having an in-depth talk about the early days of the formation and activities of the SAS in the desert from Bob Spence. This was the real story rather than the recent TV series, good as it was. We also had a fascinating presentation from John Waller about counterfeiting and the uses to which it has been put in a military context. August is our annual day trip out month and we decided to revisit the de Havilland Museum at Salisbury Hall in London Colney. The Museum has been extended by a large hangar and has totally revamped its presentations. New investment is well reflected in the professionalism of the Museum. If you have been before, we highly recommend another visit.

September will see the return of Andrew Houseman to introduce us to the U.S. General Ambrose Burnside. Guess what word he contributed to the English language? In October we will learn about the Siege of Gibraltar, 1779-1783, thanks to John Mackenzie. Quite topical with Spain making rude noises about it again. In November we return closer to home with a presentation from Battlefield Tours' Frank Baldwin, covering the Wars of the Roses battles of Barnet and St. Albans. Frank was chairman of the Battlefield Trust for eight years and nobody comes more highly regarded, especially as he was a Royal Artillery officer for ten years. December will see us having our annual Christmas lunch and probably quiz, admirably organised by Carole. **Christmas!??**

Graham Kendall

Let's Speak Spanish

We're now an established group of members who each contributes a great deal to our meetings. Instead of me planning all topics and themes, enthusiasts lead on their areas of interest. More relaxing for me and a wider range of interesting themes. So what have we been talking about?

We've learned about recently implemented laws in Spain to restrict rental and house purchase prices in expensive areas where there are difficulties for people to afford them. So, similar problems as those in the UK. Well, there's a surprise! We've heard about a visit to Cephalonia, though we weren't so keen on the relics of some saint being on view through glass and chatted about other aspects of Greece.

We compared women's rights in the UK and Spain with a list of significant dates and the impact of UK laws on our own lives. Meanwhile, what horrors for women under Franco's regime from 1939 reminiscent of the Taliban, with women officially under the authority of father or husband, and not allowed a career. The only women who could use contraception legally were prostitutes

We were introduced to the work of the acclaimed Spanish author Javier Marías, with translations also available in English. Some of us have already bought copies, either in English, or in Spanish. We hadn't even heard of him before our meeting. Afterwards a review of his most recent novel was discovered in the BIG ISSUE, which was a surprise.

A free copy in Spanish of Mary Beard's little book Women and Power was available to download. What would we do without the internet? On the subject of books, we've started sharing books we've read with others. Steven King's books are available in Spanish as well as English. That's the great thing about Spanish. It's such a widely spoken language.

The role of investigative journalists in rooting out miscarriages of justice came up for discussion. There were plenty of examples in Spain as well as here.

That all may sound rather grand, but it isn't. Most of us are not fluent, but enthusiastic and one member, well qualified in Spanish, keeps me on track. When you're trying to speak the lingo, and think at the same time, it's funny how simple words fly out of the window, but there's always someone in the group to prompt and we can smile at our mistakes and learn.

Another highlight was a piece of delicious moist birthday cake to celebrate a big 0 birthday.

Shirley King

Swimming

As you will see from the Group Listing we have changed our time slightly. Instead of the Group Session at 2pm we are meeting up for the Lane Swimming at midday! We started this at the beginning of the summer to avoid the 'crowds' during the holidays but we have all decided we prefer this scheduled time so intend to stick to it into the autumn. As we are a small group, we can suit ourselves - after some discussion, of course!

We have tried out the Hemel Hempstead swimming pool instead of the Berkhamsted pool but came to the conclusion that the very nice cafe with a view over the pool did not compensate for the crowded atmosphere and the mixed showers and changing areas! So we are sticking to Berkhamsted with its plentiful and easily accessible parking, gender-specific changing and showering areas, and warm and welcoming atmosphere. No cafe, no problem! We bring our own food and drink.

Our Group is always keen to welcome newcomers so if you are a long-time swimmer who feels better in the Medium Lane or the Fast Lane, or a beginner who feels better in the Slow Lane, do come along and share your swimming journey with us.

Maira Brook

Classical Music Appreciation [Group 035]

We continue our regular fortnightly meetings at St. Francis Church Hall, Hemel HP1 1TD, starting at 10.00am. Here is the autumn term programme:

- September 14: Susan Beale will sample for us Swans in Music.
- September 28: Robert Hoare will share his insights into Schubert's 8th (Unfinished) Symphony.
- October 12: Ron Glatter will play for us a pair of videos under the title Champions of the Cello.
- October 26: Adrian Davis will elaborate on the Life and Works of Felix Mendelssohn.
- November 9: Sue Frost will sample the works of William Walton
- November 23: Jack Scrutton will introduce a video and play excerpts from Handel's Messiah.
- December 7: A Festive Bring Your Own, with mince pies to add to the usual refreshments.

All are welcome to join our friendly group. Queries to:

jack.scrutton12@gmail.com

Science and Technology 165

We have been very fortunate in having three excellent presentations recently.

In May, Dr Stephanie Westwood revealed the exciting prospects of totally new medicines derived from mRNA technology, which gave us the vaccines to protect us from the worst effects of Covid. Many of these will enable us to tackle rare diseases and conditions that are untreatable by conventional medicine.

June's talk came from Dr Ben Robins of the University of Hertfordshire who showed us the important work he and his group had done with autistic children. His group had devised an interactive robot called Kaspar, which was in the form of a boy of the same size as the children themselves that they were encouraged to play with. He showed videos showing how much progress had been made in allowing autistic children to express emotions that they would otherwise find it very difficult to do.

Finally, in July, Tom Aldridge described the science that underlies what we know about earthquakes and their associated tsunamis. Our Earth is in continual movement and has been for hundreds and millions of years and whole continents have migrated for thousands of miles. This movement is accompanied by the tectonic plates grinding against each other as they move with the result that those areas of the World that lie on the boundaries of the plates suffer the consequences we know all too well. He showed how it was possible to design structures to withstand the worst damage and showed dramatic photos of the recent earthquake in Syria and Turkey, where whole blocks of flats had totally collapsed leaving in their background other structures properly designed and built that were relatively untouched.

In August, Peter Bushell showed how the technique of LIDAR can be used to show features just below the ground, illustrating it by showing how it has been used locally.

We have had very good support for these talks but there is normally plenty of space at St John's Hall so all are welcome to future talks. Anyone wanting to know more about our activities can contact us on:

group165@u3adacorum.org

Norman Parkyns

Railway Group

The Railway Group have enjoyed three rail related summer trips every year for the past 10 years. Our trips for 2023 were planned well in advance and on 29 June a number of us met at Hemel Hempstead station to travel to Brighton. Due to changes in the services we had to change trains several times. Our first change at Watford Junction simply involved crossing from platform 9 to 10 where our train was waiting. The change at Clapham Junction meant that after carefully 'minding the big gap' we had to go upstairs and over the bridge to reach our next service which took us to East Croydon. Changing here involved a long walk up a ramp and down again and we were only just in time for our Thameslink train to Brighton.

After a coffee break we boarded a bus down to the sea front where we rode on Volks Electric railway. This is the oldest electric railway in the world and now offers a visitors centre as well as an interesting experience.



After a seaside stroll we visited Brighton Toy and Model Museum, a fascinating collection of toys that most of us remembered from our childhood.

The return journey was much simpler as we had only one change – this time at East Croydon.

Due to threatened rail strikes our July trip to the Great Western's Steam museum in Swindon was first postponed and then cancelled and as I write we are hoping that our planned day to Chester in August will go ahead as it will be our last chance to view Pete Waterman's model rail layout of Milton Keynes Station at the Cathedral.

Jane Campbell



Exploring Towns and Villages: Berkhamsted Castle



News Group with Gagan Mohindra MP



Military History at the de Havilland Museum



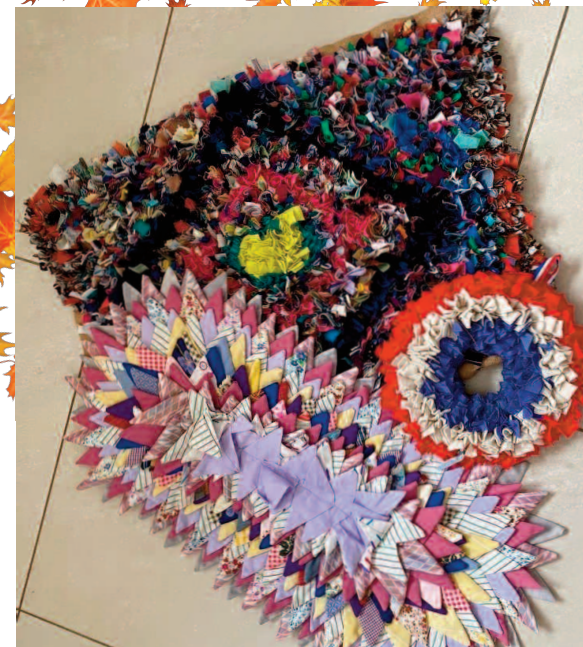
Arts, Crafts and Skills Stitched Cards



Lunch Club 2 eagerly awaiting lunch at Little Hay



Painting for Pleasure at the Redbourne Museum



Rug Making group

Fun At The Fete

On 8 July we had another u3a pitch at the Leverstock Green Village Association Fete. We had three members of the Magic group present, supposedly to pull in the punters so that Jean Sniders could recruit them. However, being kids in adult disguise, we just enjoyed ourselves!

It was amazing to see so many little jaws drop as the impossible was demonstrated. Malcolm Allan had one small boy shouting in disbelief, "That's not possible!", each time as four cards all became Three of Diamonds, then King of Hearts, and finally four Aces.

Michael Brasted and Mike Sapsard were making and giving away balloon animals like there was no tomorrow. Probably about eighty were made to order. It was a lot of fun with the occasional burst, and rude noises as air was let out before tying the end off. One infant, just walking, wanted a plain balloon, which he then handed it to his Mother. The next was handed to his father, and he only kept the last for himself. Then, a sweet young lady of three or four chased me around with the sword I had just made for her. Finally, two young men of about ten, who told me with great disdain "We're not three years old!" ended up chasing each other around with balloon swords.

Oh, and while I think Jean may have recruited a few new members, the "Laugh" in Live, Learn, Laugh definitely triumphed on the day.

Mike Sapsard

Badminton, Hemel Hempstead Leisure Centre

Every Thursday 10.00 - 12.00

This group continues to steadily grow with new members who want to practice their 'fly swatting' techniques and keep fit at the same time! There is no minimum standard as we are all of mixed ability, if you are a bit rusty and used to play then just come along, no need to pay at the desk (pay the co-ordinator inside), register your car on entry to the Centre App and come into the hall, we currently play on courts 1 & 2.

John Larkin



Painting For Pleasure

We have had a good year so far, with a gradual increase in our numbers. Our group sessions at Northchurch Social Centre have been very enjoyable, mostly with a topic such as reflections in water, old doors, Spring flowers, etc. One of our members gave us a wonderful demonstration of string painting with ink which was very creative and produced some amazing results. The Social Centre is a really good venue for us with a light airy hall and plenty of room in the car park.

In the summer months, however, we try and sketch outdoors (en plein air) which is a welcome change. We sketch in different mediums - pencil, crayon, charcoal, inks, paints or possibly use a combination. Of course, there is always some uncertainty as it is dependent on the weather, but luck was on our side again this year and the rain held off.

A group of us met at Chipperfield Common in July where there is a good range of subjects to sketch – the church, the picturesque cottages and of course the beautiful common.

Our get together in August was at Redbourn Village Museum, a new venue for most of us. We greatly enjoyed looking round the small, interesting, museum. We decided to sketch in the museum garden which is described on their website as an "outdoor gallery, featuring the impressive doorway that was once the entrance to Redbourn House. Formerly the largest residence in the village, it was frequently visited by the Queen Mother, as it belonged to a member of the Bowes-Lyon family." Some of the group attempted to sketch that door

– quite a challenge, but with good results. There were also farm implements, stocks and various objects set amongst beautiful tubs of red geraniums and some nice planting. Sometimes our sketches are used later as reference for a painting, but often they will be part of our sketchbooks – a lasting memory of a lovely morning spent with like minded people enjoying time together "Painting for Pleasure".

Linda Tomkinson



Ukulele Group, Grovehill Community Centre, Grovehill

1st Wednesday, 9:30 – 12:00 (9.30 till 10.00 class for beginners, 10 till 12 group play-along)

3rd Wednesday, 10.00 – 12.00 (group play-along, register your interest for music)

The Ukulele Group meet twice a month for practice and trying out new songs. It is a busy and fun group from novices up. The confident ones join the UkeRythmics (the performing members of Dacorum U3A very ably run by the wonderful Sue Parsons) who go out to entertain clubs and care homes in the local area. These Gigs occur on average a couple of times a month. We are not permitted to charge for performances but we are often given donations which we pass on to local charities such as Hope for Children and DENS, National charities such as Brain Tumour Research, or to 'Ukes for Unicef'. To date a lot of donations have been passed on. A picture of a recent visit to Ashlyn's Care Home appears elsewhere. So if you fancy playing the ever popular Ukulele and happy to sing along with the group feel free just to turn up on the 1st Wednesday of the month.

John & Sue

Photography Club, St John's Hall, Boxmoor

2nd Wednesday 14.00 - 16.00

Our regular meetings still explore new topics with helpful hints and also dive into some historic fun stuff too explaining old techniques and practices. We try to make it varied and not repeat topics unless to update them. The aim is to not only support those with cameras but also the use of the modern smartphone, encouraging members to get confident with their cameras and not using the 'full auto' setting to get better images. Apart from opportunist shots, to get a good picture you need to think about it and not just 'fire from the hip'.

An important part of modern imaging is using software on your computer to edit and enhance your shots, frequently we run workshops on techniques which you can then easily practice at home.

Each month we have a theme and encourage members to showcase their images. A sample of one of these is printed elsewhere from an earlier theme.

Some of our presentations and notes from previous meetings you can find on our web group page, do have a nose about the website.

If you are interested in taking images then do come along.

John Larkin

Armchair Travellers

Our May meeting was cancelled due to COVID, but we were able to travel to Amsterdam on a four day City Break with Sue Miller in June. We visited the Jewish Quarter and walked along the banks of the Amstel River on our first day. Then on our second day we visited a Banksy exhibition and the Rijksmuseum. On day three we took a walking tour starting at the old Stock Exchange and on the last day there was a visit to Our Lord in the Attic, a hidden Catholic church built in the 1600's.

In July Ully Jorimann took us on a circular road trip around the American Southwest starting in Phoenix, Arizona. There was so much to see but the highlights of the trip included; an extensive tour of Phoenix, the Grand Canyon, Canyonlands and Arches National Park, Lake Powel, Antelope Canyon and Mountain Sheep Canyon both a photographers dream then on to Monument Valley and Four Corners Monument where four states meet at one point

In July we cruised around the Islands of the Indian Ocean with Tony Williams. Our first stop was Zanzibar, visiting the capital Stone Town and Freddy Mercury's birth place. Then on to Ibo, an offshore island off Mozambique, where the old Portuguese colonial buildings were in a sorry state due to lack of funds. Our next stop was Anjouan in the Comoros islands, not really a tourist destination then to Madagascar to see the lemurs at several different landing sites. The French island of Reunion was are next stop before completing the cruise in Mauritius.

Future presentations will include; Ile de France and Paris, a trip around California, Namibia and Botswana, the UK Overseas Territories and finally Cruising the West Coast of Africa.

John Clarke

Patchwork

In the last few months we have completed three more quilts. One we gave as a gift to a past member Daphne who is currently staying in a nursing home. The other scrap quilt we donated to the same home and the alphabet quilt to a local nursery. In September we are going to start on a Father Christmas wall hanging.

Jenny Burton

Lunch Clubs 1 and 2

We have ten members in each group and we meet monthly at various locations in and around Dacorum for lunch and lively chat. We invariably sort all the world's problems out, pay for our lunch, go home and look forward to the next one!

Jerri McCann

Online Dating

"It's easy!" her friend Kath said. "They're giving a free month to join, what have you got to lose? It's a laugh!"

What had she got to lose? Lizzie typed her name in the box. It was of course wishful thinking that her soul mate would be waiting out there, just for her. She felt a little guilty at putting an old photograph on the site, but it was the only one she was proud of.

What were her hobbies? Shopping, walking, cinema. Should she put down Rod Stewart? Why? She wasn't that enamoured with the singer, but she thought it might make her sound more interesting. Damn it! In for a penny, Rod Stewart, went down, followed by – I am looking for a man who is sensitive, fun-loving, and warm, who knows how to treat a lady. She hovered over the send, but as with Rod Stewart, her finger went into involuntary mode, she pressed down.

Panic set in, she's making a fool of herself. Her cup of tea finished, Lizzie breathed a sigh of relief at being accepted onto the data base, wishing her good luck in finding her Mr Right. The waiting game had started.

Her first reply came the following morning with a photograph of a man called Norman who was almost naked and in his forties. Lizzie felt consternation at this almost lewd, pornographic picture. What is it about these men who think all you want to see is their private parts?

Michael! Was the next contender who suggested what he would like to do to her, making mad passionate love with a bit of sadism thrown in. This suggestion could be classified as rape she thought. Lizzie had already experienced a control freak and divorced him. Why in God's name would she want another one like him?

Then came David who informed her she had to win the approval of his mother before they got serious. Oh, really!

She began to doubt that she would ever find her soul mate, the one you feel comfortable with. Lizzie was thinking, she had made a mistake, when along came Charley. You couldn't call him handsome, but he had a good face, slightly cheeky with a lovely sense of humour. They talked online and then on the phone, getting on well. She felt as though she had found her soul mate as he echoed some of her own ideas. A corn field with the possibility of being caught in flagrante delicto – which he believed was stark naked; he was trying to be the clever one and was still unsure it was correct.

Curiosity got the better of her and she responded with "We must meet up for coffee or a drink." Charley suggested. The well-known tearoom in the town centre.

Lizzie sat at the furthest table from the door, giving herself a good view of who was coming in, which gave her time to look around at the other customers. The only man who sat on his own was older than the man she was looking for. Only then had she realised that her chosen man, was looking for a much younger woman. She sipped her tea and watched the door.

A family with two children, plus one in a push chair, came in and looked around for a table. The man stood up, offering them his now vacated large table, and walked across the room towards hers. "Do you mind if I sit here?" he asked. This was Charley, and they had both sent in old photos.

Lizzie liked what she saw and was delighted with the laughter in his eyes. Charley looked at her seriously, "I have an apology to make." he said. Lizzie's heart sank, he has seen me and now realises he has made a mistake and is now too embarrassed to tell me. Didn't she just know it? Charley continued "I know this might hurt you, but I have got to be truthful." Lizzie closed her eyes with disappointment. "I should have been honest with you from the beginning, the truth is, I can't stand Rod Stewart!"

Camilla Furness, Writing Testing the Waters

Rug Making

We meet once a month on a Tuesday afternoon and share ideas on various ways to produce rugs from scrap materials. A number of us have produced 'proggy' rugs (otherwise known as rag rugs) and have used a similar technique to produce celebration wreaths for Christmas, Spring and more recently the Coronation. This method is also being used to produce a picture rug.

One member of the group is now using chunky wool pegged into closely woven hessian, this is producing a rug very like the Redicut ones that many of us made in the 1960s – 1980s

Most of our materials are recycled, we use clothing that is not suitable to be sold in charity shops or off cuts from dressmaking in a variety of ways as can be seen in the picture.

New members are always welcome, we have enough materials and tools to provide a taster session.

More details from:

Jane Campbell viccamp@me.com

News Group

The group first met late last year and has since prospered with a coterie of avid members. All are welcome. We meet at Berkhamsted Football Club, Broadwater. A plus is the free safe parking in the Club's car park adjacent to the clubhouse. We meet on the second Tuesday of the month at 10.

The person running the meeting mentions stories that have appeared in the media and the audience respond. Subjects so far have touched on Brexit, UFO's, Hugh Edwards, NHS, 50,000 year old worms found in the permafrost in Russia and many other delightful subjects far too lengthy to be mentioned. We have also had a "Question Time" format chaired by our own Fiona Bruce, Tim Thompson, which was very popular. We also have the 3 minute rant and from the next meeting the 5 minute whinge! (Open to all). At one meeting we had a quiz kindly prepared by Beth Palfery, we also have a News Quiz.

At 11am we have tea or coffee and assorted biscuits. People can sit at real tables and converse with others, all included in the entrance fee of £3. Where else can you get such wonderful entertainment for such a pittance?

At the August meeting we were very pleased to welcome Gagan Mohindra MP (rhymes with Dragon, said his Press and Communications Officer) Gagan told of us of the Boundary Changes. Berkhamsted is being hived off with Harpenden. He said he will not represent his current constituency, and so far 40 people have applied to take it on. I wonder if Boris is one of them? He stayed for the whole two hours and was positively charming and helpful. He welcomed questions on everything from housing to migrant boats to their banks. In fact Gagan said he had trouble due to his prominent position, shades of Nigel Farage.

We are inviting people from other political parties to come and tell us of their thoughts and what they believe. We have Gordon Yearwood who designed the Hospice of St Francis coming to the group on 10 October, I am sure a possible new hospital will be discussed amongst many things about the NHS.

Our meetings are held in a non-confrontational way, all opinions are respected and we believe in free speech. Many people think that it was Voltaire who said "I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it". It was Evelyn Beatrice Hall who wrote that she thought that's what he meant. So things that are commonly believed are not necessarily true.

We are very fortunate that a lot of people who are not male attend, I think they are called women but I do not want to upset anybody.

Please do come if you are interested in current affairs, just email me in advance, so I can reserve you a chair.

John Waller

Group Listings

If you wish to attend a group for the first time, or if anything is unclear, please **contact the person listed** to express your interest, to find out how it works, and **whether there is space**. This list is correct as at 23 August 2023.

Meeting days may change if bank holidays occur.

085 Armchair Traveller St John's Church Hall, Boxmoor	John Clarke group085@u3adacorum.org	3 rd Tues 2.00-4.00
039 Art Club Gadebridge Community Centre HH	Patricia Angell group039@u3adacorum.org	alt Fridays 10.00-12.00
223 Arts/Crafts/Skills Temporarily at Kings Arms, HP4 3HL (contact for details)	Susan Woodhams group223@u3adacorum.org	2 nd Monday 10.00-12.00
190 Astronomy Practical St Mary/St Joseph's Hall, Boxmoor	Roger Witts group190@u3adacorum.org	2 nd Thurs 2.00-4.00
360 Badminton Hemel Leisure Centre, Park Road, HP1 1JS	John Larkin group360@u3adacorum.org	Thurs weekly 10.00-12.00
363 Book Group Brudge Street BK.	Barbara Plater group363@u3adacorum.org	3 rd Thursdays 2.00-4.00
029 Book Reading HH St John's Church Hall, Boxmoor	Jenny Thirlwell group029@u3adacorum.org	2 nd /4 th Mon 10.00-12.00
183 Bus Trippers Various Locations	Jane Campbell group183@u3adacorum.org	2 nd Weds
007 Calligraphy Village Hall, Leverstock Green	Diana Knapp group007@u3adacorum.org	Mon 2-weekly 1.00-3.00
048 Card Making A 15 Sundew Road, HH	Catherine Lindsay group048@u3adacorum.org	1 st Tues 10.00-12.00
177 Card Making B Open Door Café, Berkhamsted	Lesley Drake group177@u3adacorum.org	3 rd Fridays 1:30 - 3:30
011 Circle Dance Carey Baptist Hall, Marlowes, HH	James Robertson group011@u3adacorum.org	1 st & 3 rd Tues 11.00-12.30
069 Computer Support St John's Hall, Boxmoor	Terry Thirlwell group069@u3adacorum.org	Last Fridays 2.00-4.30
080 Creative Writing B 20 Wrensfield, Hemel	Kay Reid group080@u3adacorum.org	Thu 3-weekly 2.00-4.00
082 Creative Writing C Sacred Heart Church, Park St Bk	Janet Goacher group082@u3adacorum.org	1 st Thurs 1.00-3.00
046 Cribbage & Scrabble Adeyfield Community Centre, HH	Althea Jones group046@u3adacorum.org	2 nd & 4 th Mon 2.00-4.00
064 Cycling Various locations (usually stations)	Peter Hamson group064@u3adacorum.org	1 st Thurs 10.00 start

090 Discussion B Holly House, 6 Barncroft Rd, Berk'd	Tim Thompson group090@u3adacorum.org	4 th Tue 2.10-4.30
081 Exploring London Various days; last week of month	Sue Miller group081@u3adacorum.org	Last week, not Jan/Feb
197 Exploring Towns/Villages Visits by car share	Laura Rouse Jean Sniders group197@u3adacorum.org	Usually 3 rd Thurs
073 Flower Arranging Highfield Community Centre, HH	Carol Cotton Val Norris group073@u3adacorum.org	2 nd Thurs, Not Jul/Aug 2.00-4.00
159 Folk Singing Adeyfield Free Church Centre, Maylands Ave, HH	Brian Jackson group159@u3adacorum.org	2 nd & 4 th Weds 10.00-12.00
202 French Book Club 28 Highclere Drive, Hemel	Lyn Parkyns group202@u3adacorum.org	Last Tue 2 mthly 3.00-5.00
214 French Conversation (Adv) Members' homes	Bernadette Streater grou214@u3adacorum.org	1 st & 3 rd Tues 10.15-12.00
018 Garden Visiting Various locations (Mar – Oct)	Lin Phillips group018@u3adacorum.org	2 nd Weds 2.00 start
017 Gardening A Berkhamsted Various locations	Gillian Bailey group017@u3adacorum.org	3 rd Thursdays 10.00 or 10.30
019 Genealogy A Berkhamsted Zoom	Susan Hood group019@u3adacorum.org	2 nd Mondays 2.00-4.00
051 Genealogy B HH St Paul's, Highfield, & Zoom Hybrid	Margaret Fairburn group051@u3adacorum.org	3 rd Mondays 10.00-12.00 Not December
059 German Improvers St John's Hall, Boxmoor	Heather Al-Jawad group059@u3adacorum.org	alt Mondays 2.30-4.30
024 Industrial History St John's Hall, Boxmoor	Arthur Cunningham group024@u3adacorum.org	3 rd Weds 10.00-12.00
095 Italian Language & Culture St John's Hall, Boxmoor	Jim & Lorna Grimes group095@u3adacorum.org	2 nd & 4 th Thurs 10.00-12.00
092 More Italian Members' Homes	Marie McHale group092@u3adacorum.org	1 st & 3 rd Thurs 2.30-4.30
156 Italian, Step 2 Adeyfield Community Centre, HH	Tina Leach group156@u3adacorum.org	Every Friday 2.00-4.00
188 Japanese Various addresses/Zoom. Check First	Chris Watson group188@u3adacorum.org	2 nd & 4 th Thurs 10.00-11.30
026 Jazz Appreciation St Francis' Church Hall, Boxmoor	Bernard Newton group026@u3adacorum.org	Thu 4-weekly 10.00-12.15
175 Knit and Natter A (Hemel) 61 Tile Kiln Lane Leverstock Green	Lana Linden group175@u3adacorum	Alt Weds 2.00-4.00

076 Latin (Beginners) Various Locations in Berkhamsted	Chris Watson group076@u3adacorum.org	2 nd & 4 th Weds 2.30-4.00
076 Latin (Intermediate) Various locations in Berkhamsted	Chris Watson group076@u3adacorum.org	1 st & 3 rd Weds 2.30-4.00
027 Literature A Various locations in Berkhamsted	Cherry Stainforth group027@u3adacorum.org	Tue 10-12.00 fortnightly
028 Literature B Various homes in Berkhamsted	Judy Roythorne group028@u3adacorum.org	Mon 3-weekly 10.00-12.00
030 Literature C Victoria Hall, Akeman St., Tring	Sue Hexter group030@u3adacorum.org	4 th Mondays 10.30-12.30
031 Local History St John's Hall, Boxmoor	Bernard Lamb group031@u3adacorum.org	4 th or Last Tue 2.00-4.00
157 Lunch Club: Tuesday A Various venues	Jerri McCann group157@u3adacorum.org	2 nd Tuesdays Ring for times
203 Lunch Club: Tuesday B Various venues	Jerri McCann group203@u3adacorum.org	4 th Tuesdays Ring for times
215 Magic (Introduction) Village Hall, Leverstock Green	Mike Sapsard group215@u3adacorum.org	Fri 2-weekly 2.00-4.00
060 Mahjong St John's Hall, Boxmoor	Jenny Thirlwell group060@u3adacorum.org	1 st & 3 rd Weds 10.00-12.00
361 Maths St John's Hall, Boxmoor	Keith Holmes Roger Witts group361@u3adacorum.org	3 rd Mondays 2.00-4.00
065 Military History St John's Hall, Boxmoor	Graham Kendall group065@u3adacorum.org	1 st Weds 10.00-12.00
025 Money Matters St John's Hall, Boxmoor	Tom Bloch Jan Wheeler group025@u3adacorum.org	2 nd Mondays 10.00-12.00
035 Music Apprec (Classical) St Francis' Hall, Boxmoor	Sue Frost Jack Scrutton group035@u3adacorum.org	Thu 2-weekly 10.00-12.00
089 Music Miscellany St Francis' Hall, Boxmoor	Bob Day group089@u3adacorum.org	Thu 4-weekly 10.00-12.00
037 Nature Study (outdoors) Meet car park, St John's, Boxmoor	Chris Lindsay group037@u3adacorum.org	Every Tues 10.00-1.30
038 Needlework , Third Oak, Little Heath Lane, Potten End	Lesley Drake group038@u3adacorum.org	alt Tuesdays 10.00-12.00
362 News Group , Berkhamsted Football Club	John Waller group362@u3adacorum.org	2 nd Tuesday 10:00-12:00
067 Opera (Introduction to) 25 Ryder Close, Bovingdon	Maggie Moore group067@u3adacorum.org	3 rd Fridays 2.00-4.00

075 Out with Friends St John's Hall, Boxmoor	Debbie Sargeant group075@u3adacorum.org	1 st Fridays 10.00-12.00
036 Painting for Pleasure Social Centre, Bell Lane, N'thchurch (outside sketching in Summer)	Sue Bloch Linda Tomkinson group036@u3adacorum.org	1 st Thurs 10.00-12.00
196 Painting for You Adeyfield Community Centre	Althea Jones group196@u3adacorum.org	2 nd & 4 th Friday 2:00-4.00
040 Patchwork Adeyfield Community Centre HH	Jenny Burton group040@u3adacorum.org	2 nd & 4 th Weds 1.00-3.00
045 Pencil Drawing Adeyfield Community Centre, HH	Jean Houston group045@u3adacorum.org	1 st Weds 10.00-12.00
061 Philosophy Quaker Meeting House, Hemel	Denis Maclure group061@u3adacorum.org	alt Tues 2.30-4.30
151 Photography St John's Hall, Boxmoor	Terry Thirlwell John Larkin group151@u3adacorum.org	2 nd Weds 2.00-4.00
041 Play Reading A Middle Road, Berkhamsted	Cathy Ayling group041@u3adacorum.org	2 nd Tuesdays 10.00-12.30
042 Play Reading B Zoom, Various Homes	Gillian Southgate Ruth Treves Brown group042@u3adacorum.org	1 st Weds 10.00-12.00
043 Playing Early Music Locations in Berkhamsted	Derek Guyatt group043@u3adacorum.org	Last Mondays 2.00-4.00
071 Poetry Appreciation George Street Hemel Hempstead	Margaret Ainsworth group071@u3adacorum.org	3 rd Weds 2.15-4.15
088 Poetry Writing 53 Gravel Lane, Boxmoor	Audrey Naylor group088@u3adacorum.org	Mon 3 weekly 2.00-4.00
167 Railways Summer Rail Visits Otherwise St Paul's Church Hall	Jane Campbell Vic Campbell group167@u3adacorum.org	Last Thurs 10.00-12.00
182 Reading BK Cedar Road Berkhamsted	Denis Maclure group182@u3adacorum.org	2 nd Fridays 10.00-12.30
213 Rug Makers St Paul's Parish Hall	Jane Campbell group213@u3adacorum.org	2 nd Tuesday 2.00-4.00
084 Russian 9 Briar Way, Berkhamsted	Yan Christensen group084@u3adacorum.org	Every Thurs 10.00-12.00
165 Science & Technology St John's Hall, Boxmoor	David Eastham Norman Parkyns group165@u3adacorum.org	Last Weds 2.15-4.00
185 Sewing Bee Adeyfield Community Centre, HH	Jenny Barnfield group185@u3adacorum.org	2 nd & 4 th Tue 10.00-12.00

186 Short Day Trips Various locations and dates	Lionel Howard group186@u3adacorum.org	See page 8 for details
187 Spanish Lang & Culture "Let's Speak Spanish" Potten End	Shirley King group187@u3adacorum.org	2 nd and 4 th Wednesdays 2:30-4:30
221 Swimming Berkhamsted Leisure Centre	Moir Brook group221@u3adacorum.org	3 rd Fridays 2:00-4:00
217 Table Tennis A Adeyfield Community Centre, HH	Sarah Glennie group217@u3adacorum.org	1 st & 3 rd Weds 2.00-4.00
224 Table Tennis B Adeyfield Community Centre, HH	Mark Chapman group224@u3adacorum.org	2 nd & 4 th Weds 2.00-4.00
005 Tea Dance Apsley Community Centre HH	Mike Sapsard group005@u3adacorum.org	Alt Tues 2.00- 4.00 (Not Aug)
181 Ukulele Grovehill Community Centre HH	John Gardener group181@u3adacorum.org	1 st Weds 9.30 - 12.00 3 rd Weds 10:00 - 12:00
220 Urban Sketchers Various Dacorum locations	Althea Jones group220@u3adacorum.org	May – Sep 2 nd & 4 th Tues Oct – Apr 4 th Tues 10.00-12.00
099 Walking – various locations	Peter Bushell group099@u3adacorum.org	4 th Tuesday 9.30 start
204 Wild Flower Study Outdoors, Various Locations	Jenny Dickson group204@u3adacorum.org	Wed, Thur, 2 - weekly 10-12
078 Wine Appreciation St John's Church Hall, Boxmoor	Tony Pye group078@u3adacorum.org	First Fridays 2.30-4.30



Ukerythmics At Ashlyns



Sunflower: Mike Watson



Snowdrops: Alan Reid



Iris: Linda van Geene



Egyptian Lotus: Brian Burgess

Photography Club Collage by John Larkin

u3a Dacorum Committee Members

Trustees:

Chair: Vacant	chair@u3adacorum.org	
Vice Chair: Jane Campbell	vicechair@u3adacorum.org	(email only)
Treasurer: Peter Marshall	treasurer@u3adacorum.org	(email only)
Secretary: Ellen Duffy	secretary@u3adacorum.org	(email only)
Groups Coordinator: Lee Pace	groups@u3adacorum.org	(email only)
Digest Editor: John Dodkins	editor@u3adacorum.org	(email only)
Speakers: Lee Pace	speakers@u3adacorum.org	(email only)
Beacon: John Dodkins	beaconadmin@u3adacorum.org	(email only)
Coopted Trustee: Harvey Collyer		

Members of u3a Dacorum may contact any Committee Member with suggestions, ideas, and complaints, or for advice on matters relating to u3a activities.

Committee Associates:

Membership: Jean Sniders	members@u3adacorum.org	(email only)
Web Admin: Mike Sapsard	mike.sapsard@gmail.com	(email only)
Beacon & web: Anne Menzies	admina@u3adacorum.org	(email only)
Hall Bookings: Margaret Taylor	halls@u3adacorum.org	(email only)
Equipment: Terry Thirlwell	equipment@u3adacorum.org	(email only)
CAN/Group News: Alan Osborn	news@u3adacorum.org	(email only)
Photocopies: Judy Baldwin	photocopy@u3adacorum.org	(email only)
Minutes: Lorna Grimes	minutes@u3adacorum.org	(email only)



The highlight of the afternoon for the Garden Visiting group is usually Tea and Cake!



u3a Dacorum is supported by Dacorum Borough Council

PRESIDENT: The Mayor of the Borough of Dacorum

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Card Making (B) Berkhamsted Group